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House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Rep. Will Carpenter, Chair

Opponent Testimony, Written

HB 2809 – Creating the every mom matters act

Chair Carpenter and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB2809.

Mainstream OPPOSES HB2809 and other attempts to negatively impact a person's ability to access safe and legal abortion. Through this so-called 'every mom matters' act, HB2809 diverts state funding and government resources towards supporting anti-abortion clinics, which are often overt religious institutions promoting, or even imposing, Christian ideology upon vulnerable participants.

Mainstream opposes this bill for the following reasons:

- **Diversion of state funds for anti-abortion contractors.** This act provides an unknown amount of state funds for these contractors on the single condition that they don't provide abortions or are an affiliate of an abortion provider. By earmarking uncapped state dollars for these services, the state is using public funds to promote a narrow version of reproductive health that denies a crucial aspect of a person's constitutional right to bodily autonomy - safe and legal abortions.
- **State support for undefined services and marketing.** This act sets a series of services that the contractor must provide, but then allows for "any other services available to participants that further the purposes of this act," as well as "marketing expenses incurred by the contractor for marketing of the support services and resources the contractor may provide." This open-ended definition of services means that the legislature is proposing the funding of services and marketing that will be left entirely up to the discretion of the contractor and their individual agenda.
- **Promotion of discredited pregnancy centers.** Though not explicitly named, the contractors in this act would most likely be pregnancy centers which are often not legitimate healthcare centers, and instead are unregulated centers with numerous cited

unethical practices¹. Instead of providing the medical care for pregnant women in need of services, they proselytize, coerce, and scare people to carry pregnancies to term and share unproven medical advice regarding disinformation like abortion reversal² and coercive counseling with mandated faith-based courses³.

- **Unchecked religious prioritization, resulting in potential discriminatory practices.** Section 7 of this act protects religious freedom for contractors, but is actually a government preference for specific religious belief. If there was true religious freedom enshrined within this act, then the legislature would recognize the diversity of religious belief, such as the Jewish value of upholding safe and legal abortions as reproductive health care⁴. Further, this language allows for a contractor to require religious programming and educational materials rather than keeping religious ideology out of our health care. And finally, the “conscientious objection” clause could allow for the unchecked discrimination for services that would fall under a contractor’s purview, such as refusing to share with a participant adoption information for agencies that work with LGBTQ+ individuals wishing to adopt.
- **Break down of the separation of religion and government.** The belief that life begins upon inception is enshrined within certain religions, and HB2809 would impose this definition upon all Kansans – a clear violation of religious freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Kansas voters have already spoken that they support the constitutional right to reproductive health care, not the governmental interference of imposing religious belief upon their bodily autonomy. Government has no place in religion, and religion has no place in government.

Instead of dedicating more state general funds towards anti-abortion centers, we encourage the committee to pursue opportunities to improve maternal health and reproductive health care services for Kansans. SB2809 would establish the so-called every mom matters act, but is far from providing the truly compassionate, life-saving care that so many Kansas moms need. This money should instead be invested in medical care centers that provide resources and support for all pregnant Kansans, regardless of their pregnancy outcome. True compassion for pregnant people is found in comprehensive medical care that is evidence-based and scientifically

¹ *The Alliance CPC Study: Full Findings & Study Methods*. The Alliance. (n.d.).
https://alliancestateadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/Alliance_CPC_Report_FullFindings11-1.pdf

² *Medication abortion reversal is not supported by science*. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (n.d.).
<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science>

³ *Kansas Anti-Abortion Center Funding*. Equity Forward. (n.d.).
https://equityfwd.org/sites/default/files/kansas_equity_forward_anti-abortion_center_funding_fact_sheet_v3.pdf

⁴ *Jewish Perspectives on Abortion*. Rabbi Raymond A. Zwerin & Rabbi Richard J. Shapiro. (n.d.).
<https://rcrc.org/jewish/>

accurate. Legislation that truly values families with young children would invest in existing and evidence-based systems that lift children out of poverty and don't end once the child is 2 years old.

For these reasons, Mainstream opposes HB2809. We urge you to reject this effort to undermine Kansans' constitutional rights to abortion and religious freedom.

Thank you,

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Mainstream